



PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS AND JOB AVAILABILITY AS PREDICTORS OF CAREER CHOICE AMONG GRADUATES IN IBADAN, OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated psychological factors (attitude, perception and beliefs) and job availability (economic factors and technological factors) as predictors of career choice among graduates in Ibadan, Oyo State. The study employed a survey research design. Respondents were 450 graduates (183 males and 267 females) whose year of graduation fell between 2010 and 2015 within Ibadan Metropolis. They responded to Career Choices Predictors ($\alpha = 0.91$), a self developed questionnaires. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used as the method of data analysis for the study. The result of the study showed that attitude, perception, belief, economic factors and technological advances, all had significant influences on career choices among graduates. Understanding these predictors of career choice will help guidance counsellors and educators to orientate students in career path planning before they graduate. To aid graduates in their career making decisions, sustainable recommendation were made in this study.

Keywords: Graduates, Attitude, Perception, Belief, Job availability, and Career choice

INTRODUCTION

One of the expectations of university graduates is getting a paid job and choosing a line of career into the future. Each individual is faced with choosing among the large areas of occupational cluster of works (Fry, Stoner & Hattwick, 1998). According to Adamson, Doherty and Viney (1998), career requires fundamental decisions. Decision is therefore characterized by a series of compromises the individual makes between his wishes and possibilities (Osipow, 2003). Chen (1997) was of the opinion that career choice decisions that graduates make are influenced not only by their development but also by the context in which they live. There is always a kind of dilemma on which career to choose among many that could guarantee sustenance and job security. Taking a choice decision about one's career is vital, so graduates have to make exhaustive career research before making their choices (Aryee & Luk, 1996; Kirchmeyer, 2006). Each individual choosing a career is influenced by many factors, including the context in which they live, their personal aptitudes, and educational attainment (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, 2001). Edvardsson, Hallgrimsdottir, Johannsson and Eyporsson (2002) submit that most important factors predicting the selection of career after graduation were family related, a company to work for, career choice that provides useful practical experience and the job that offers interesting job.



According to Haase and Lautenschläger (2011), there are two conditions for career choice to happen; the career option must be available and also, the individual must have preference for the job over other job around. Other important issues around career choice of graduates are psychological factors (attitude, perception and beliefs) and job availability (economic factors and technological factors).

Attitudes of graduates towards life and things around them determine their choice of career for the future. There is considerable evidence to support the contention that attitude and beliefs contribute to career choice by enhancing the motivation to achieve (Bandura, 1977). According to McGaha (2005), attitude is commonly referred to as beliefs and feelings related to a person or event and their resulting behaviour. When an individual has a kind of attitude that contradicts the job content of a career, such an individual is not likely to choose career along the path of his dislikes (Gostein, 2003). This is the reason behind the choice of career of individuals who do not like the sight of blood; such individuals would not want careers in nursing or medicine.

The career choice that graduates make is embedded in their 'perceptions' of the ideal job. According to Husain, Mokhtar, Ahmad and Mustapha (2010), this acts as a filter for job appropriateness and it influences the choice process. Individuals' choices are therefore based on perceptions of their environment, their opportunities, and their perceived personalities. In a study, Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) found that the Big Five factors predict a wide range of career variables like career decision making, job search behaviour, job satisfaction and career development beliefs. Maharaj (2010) also stand by the conviction that career choices are based on perceptions of students' environment, their opportunities, and their perceived personalities (Cartmell & Garton, 2000). These choices will be based on perceptions of their environment, their opportunities, and their perceived personalities (Mayrhofer, Steyrer, Meyrer, Strunk, Schiffinger & Iellatchitch, 2005).

The values of an individual also affect his attitudes, behaviours and thoughts. According to Kristen and Nasta (2007), the social and personal preference is the result of continuous beliefs that act in a particular way of living and behaving or vice versa. Career choices are often guided not by personal potentials but by what everyone believes is a good career (Tsaousides, Theodore, Jome & LaRae, 2010). Therefore, 'beliefs' affect the choices we make. Career beliefs are strongly held convictions about the specific career of choice or about the world of work. Prestige, for example, is a powerful influence on career choice (Dehghani, Marzieh, Pakmehr, Hamideh, Mirdoraghi & Fatemeh, 2011).

Career decisions of graduates could also be determined by their socio-economic background. Sarwar and Azmat (2013) point out that the three broad categories of factors that could influence career choice are personal factors such as the prestige given to individual to the type of career, socio-economic factors such as the job opportunities and socialisers such as parents. Singaravelu et al. (2005) find that family influence is one of the most prominent determinants of career choice for graduates. Most graduates would want to adopt their parents' profession believing that the profession of their parents is easy to adopt and follow (Clutter, 2010). Economic gains from a career would influence graduates choice of such careers. A career that offers comparatively good returns in terms of expected income will be attractive to those choosing a career (Arthur, Khapove & Wilderom, (2005).

According to Avugla (2011), another factor affecting choices of careers among people is advances in technology. In the past, industrial ventures require employees to work on factory lines



but now are able to use computer-operated machines. According to Baruch (2006), advances in technology has come to displace some types of work but individuals will adapt to these changes by inventing entirely new types of work and by taking advantage of unique human capabilities. With rapid changes in technology and global competition, it is crucial that adolescents be fully equipped with creative skills that will make them relevant, and be able to subdue hindrances capable of preventing them from their choice careers (Hassan & Ogunyemi, 2008). When these requisites skills are lacking, it has a great economical, political and social consequences for a nation like Nigeria where the adolescents and youth make up over a third (31.6 %) of Nigeria's large and growing population (National Population Commission, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Confusion pervades the minds of today's graduates when it comes to making career choices, as they are faced with uncertainties. Many of the graduates neither make adequate research on their future career nor do they receive adequate directions from their school guidance coordinators or appropriate person. Most of them are not aware of what goes into career choice. Many graduates go into unsuitable careers due to ignorance, inexperience, peer pressure, advice from friends, parents and teachers or as a result of the prestige attached to certain jobs without adequate career counselling. This situation compels one to ask whether these graduates are given the needed guidance on available careers relating to the programmes they have pursued. The prevalence of negative consequences of wrong career choice such as lack of satisfaction on the job has made the study of career choice among University graduates imperative.

Purpose of the study

The objective of this study was to examine the extent to which psychological factors (attitude, perception and belief) predicts career choice among graduates; also the extent to which job availability (economic factors and technological advances) predicts career choice among graduates in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

The study will be of immense benefit to individual graduates, who will henceforth be able to make informed decisions towards choices in their future careers. It will also be an eye-opener for graduates, who will begins to explore real career possibilities even before they will ever find themselves in the labour market. They will have no confusion on how to consider many alternative choices in career selection.

Also, this study will be of great benefit to organizations who employ these graduates as training and retraining of workers will become more meaningful and directional as organizations would then have workers who have made up their minds and not those who take up employments under some other conditions.



Hypotheses

The following two null hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study:

- Ho₁: There will be no significant relationship between attitude and career choice among graduates in Ibadan, Oyo State.
- Ho₂: There will be no significant relationship between perception and career choice among graduates in Ibadan, Oyo State.
- Ho₃: There will be no significant relationship between belief and career choice among graduates in Ibadan, Oyo State.
- Ho₄: There will be no significant relationship between economic factors and career choice among graduates in Ibadan, Oyo State.
- Ho₅: There will be no significant relationship between technological factors and career choice among graduates in Ibadan, Oyo State.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study was the *ex-post facto* type. The area of study was Ibadan metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria. The population of this study comprised of the entire university graduates of between 2010 and 2015 in Ibadan. Four hundred and fifty (450) graduates (183 males and 267 females) participated in the study. The instrument for the study was Career Choice Predictors (CCP), a self-developed questionnaire. It was divided into two sections, A and B. Section a consisted of demographic variables, while section B consisted of 62 items based on the variable of the study. The Likert-4 point scale response option of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) was used. The instrument has a reliability coefficient of 0.91. The researchers administered the instrument to the respondents in the various recruiting organizations within Ibadan metropolis. The data generated from the study was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC).

RESULTS

Hypotheses

Ho₁: There will be no significant relationship between attitude and career choice among graduates in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Table 1: PPMC showing the relationship between attitude and career choice

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev	Df	R	P	Remark
Career choice	450	47.5824	7.49441	448	.890	<.001	Ho ₁ rejected
Attitude	450	47.2896	7.46032				

P <0.05



Table 1 reveals the relationship that exists between attitude and career choice; $r(450) = .890$, $p < .001$. That is, there is a significant relationship between attitude and career choice. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. The table further reveals that attitude has positive influence on career choice. This implies that an increase in attitude will increase the tendency for career choice. Coefficient of determination $r^2 = 0.792$, reveals that attitude had large influence on career choice.

H_{02} : There will be no significant relationship between perception and career choice among graduates in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Table 2: PPMC showing the relationship between perception and career choice

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev	Df	r	P	Remark
Career choice	450	47.5824	7.49441	448	.920	<.001	Ho ₂ rejected
Perception	450	47.3710	7.38443				

$P < 0.05$

Table 2 reveals the relationship that exists between perception and career choice; $r(450) = .920$, $p < .001$. That is, there is a significant relationship between perception and career choice. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. The table further reveals that perception positively influenced career choice. This implies that an increase perception will increase the career choice. Coefficient of determination $r^2 = 0.846$, reveals that perception had large influence on career choice.

H_{03} : There will be no significant relationship between belief and career choice among graduates in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Table 3: PPMC showing the relationship between belief and career choice

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev	Df	r	P	Remark
Career choice	450	47.5824	7.49441	448	.342	<.001	Ho ₃ rejected
Belief	450	47.0475	8.38321				

$P < 0.05$

Table 3 reveals the relationship that exist between belief and career choice; $r(450) = .342$, $p < .001$. That is, there is a significant relationship between belief and career choice. Hence the null

hypothesis is rejected. The table further reveals that belief positively influenced career choice. In essence, increase in belief will contribute to the career choice. Coefficient of determination $r^2=0.117$, reveals that belief had moderate influence on career choice.

Ho₄: There will be no significant relationship between economic factors and career choice among graduates in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Table 4: PPMC showing the relationship between economic factors and career choice

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev	Df	r	P	Remark
Career choice	450	47.5824	7.49441	448	.214	<.001	Ho ₅ rejected
Economic factors	450	45.8223	10.62113				

P < 0.05

Table 4 reveals the relationship between economic factors and career choice; $r(450) = .214, p < .001$. That is, there is a significant relationship between involvement in economic factors and career choice. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. The table further reveals that economic factors making positively influenced career choice. This implies that an increase in economic factors increase the career choice. Coefficient of determination $r^2=0.046$, reveals that economic factors had small influence on career choice.

Ho₅: There will be no significant relationship between technological factors and career choice among graduates in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Table 5: PPMC showing the relationship between technological factors and career choice

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev	Df	r	P	Remark
Career choice	450	47.5824	7.49441	448	.209	<.001	Ho ₆ rejected
Technological factors	450	45.8340	10.88966				

P < 0.05



Table 5 reveals the relationship between technological factors and career choice; $r(450) = .209$, $p < .001$. That is, there is a significant relationship between involvement in technological factors and career choice. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. The table further reveals that technological factors making positively influenced career choice. This implies that an increase in technological factors increase the career choice. Coefficient of determination $r^2 = 0.044$, reveals that technological factors had small influence on career choice.

DISCUSSION

Finding has revealed that there is a positive relationship existing between attitude and career choice. In view of the result from the analysis made on the attitude affect career choices among graduates, the outcome is in line with the submissions of Dehghani, Marzieh, Pakmehr, Hamideh, Mirdoraghi and Fatemeh (2011). This is also reflected in the view of Rice (2006) and that of Saka, Noa, Gati, Itamar (2011) that values are the source for the criteria evaluating and judging people's thoughts and actions and also guiding to respond the universal needs of societies. Although, Saka, Noa, Gati and Itamar (2011) believe that individuals have a set of values based on institutional, social, political, theoretical, religious, aesthetic, and economic values. This ascertain that attitude and career choice is an individual perceived attitudes and behaviours and integrated work-related activities during the life experience of a person especially in making career choice. This was not directly in line with the developmental theories of career emphasized on the importance of personal interests, skills, and values when expressing the barriers in decision-making as stated by Creed et al., (2007).

Finding also reveals a positive the relationship existing between perception and career choice. On the perception of graduates and career choice, the view of successive literatures where Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) summarized and indicated that Big Five factors predict a wide range of other career variables, including career decision making process, job search behaviour, job satisfaction and career development beliefs was not in line the findings on this study. This finding agrees with Edvardsson, Hallgrimsdottir, Johannsson and Eyborsson's (2002) view that the most important reason why a person chooses a particular career is that the person has intrinsic interest in the field.

Also, finding has revealed relationships that exist between belief and career choice. Positive career beliefs facilitate clients' movement through the career decision-making process, create positive expectations, and contribute to effective problem-solving behaviour (Peterson, 1996) clients with positive beliefs are able to apply knowledge about themselves and occupations into realistic career and lifestyle goals, and ultimately engage in career-related behaviours. On the contrary, seasonal fluctuation disagreed that career choice does not really have effect on career choice of graduates.

Finding has also revealed that there is a significant relationship between economic factors and career choice. It is simple to understand that since people work for financial gains, choices of career is determined by what a career offers in terms of economic benefits. Perhaps, the possible attributes could be what prevails in the labour market and one's economic strengths



which together may lead to change of career choice motives among students. This shows clearly that the level of socio-economic benefits accruing from a career can affect graduates' career choices. Nevertheless, the economic background of the majority of students is poor therefore; most of them depend on the government loan to finance their education. Again, this affects the career choices of many undergraduate students such that; the majority will be just hunting to the programmes in which they are assured of the government sponsorship. This is in line with the views of Sarwar and Azmat (2013) whose emphasis was on socio-economic factors as an important determinant of career choice. Economic gains from a career would influence graduates choice of such careers. Arthur, Khapove and Wilderom (2005) also added his opinionated voice that a career that offers comparatively good returns in terms of expected income will be attractive to those choosing a career.

Finding also reveals that there is a significant relationship between involvement in technological factors and career choice. The outcome of the analysis which showed that technological advancement is a factor to reckon with. In the view of Hassan and Ogunyemi (2008), rapid changes in technology and global competition in all facets of human endeavour is crucial than ever that adolescents who are the hopes of tomorrow are fully equipped with creative skills that will make them relevant and be able to subdue hindrances capable of preventing them from translating their dreams to realities. The assertion of Husain, Mokhtar, Ahmad and Mustapha (2010) was confirmed on the investigation made on the graduates as employers' perceptions of employability skills, and they classified the employability skills in the areas of problem solving, decision making, organization and time management, communication, interpersonal skills, leadership, lifelong learning, and professional behaviours.

Implication of findings

This outcome has implication for counselling psychologists, educators and policy makers to incorporate emotional intelligence components in the Institution in order to stimulate creative potentials of graduates.

The role of parents, the broader family, peer groups, neighbourhood influences and schools in fostering creative potentials of learners before they graduate.

This study has thus provided a spring board for further studies on variables that facilitate or inhibit creativity among young people in Nigeria. It is however suggested that researchers should conduct interventions applying principles of behavioural modifications in other to experimentally enhance career choice among graduates.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations were put forward for the consideration and possible implementation of all key stake holders such as parents, students and counsellors:



Understanding these predictors of career choice and their level of significance will help educators to orientate students in career path planning before they graduate. There is need for career counsellors to design programmes that take into account the influences of personal factors, socio-economic factors and family in advising students on their career choices.

Career choice should be inculcated in the school curriculum so that right from the start students would know what should go into their choice of careers. In contrast, to learning by authority which requires students to use thinking skills such as recognition, memory, and logical reasoning abilities which are most frequently assessed by traditional tests of intelligence and scholastic aptitude.

Teachers should stimulate creative thinking and learning in the students and this involve such abilities as evaluation (especially the ability to sense problems, inconsistencies, and missing elements); divergent production (e.g., fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration); and redefinition.

Teachers should also offer a lesson plan with plenty of opportunities for creative behaviours. Parents should remove restrictions on children's desire to explore the world by not using discouraging words such as "curiosity killed the cat." They should be taught to learn by exploring, risking, manipulating, testing, and modifying ideas.

Children should be taught to appreciate and be pleased with their own career choice. Parents can show children that their ideas have value by listening to their ideas and considering them. Overly detailed supervision, too much reliance on prescribed curricula, failure to appraise learning resulting from a child's own initiative should be discouraged.

Policy makers should review the curriculum and incorporate components capable of stimulating the emotional intelligence of learners which is desired for creative endeavours. The school authority and parents should make provision for environment that enhances career choice.

The present study focused on the attitude, perception, belief. Others are seasonal fluctuations, economic and technological factors that influence the career choice of graduates in Ibadan, Oyo State. Although, the respondents cut across different universities in the country, yet it is still recommended that further studies be undertaken in other universities in the country to collaborate the findings of the present study and to ensure their generalization.

It was recommended that Career Education and Guidance should be introduced in the primary school to enable children to explore the world of work as young people need to make a smooth transition from primary school to the initial years of senior high school and the Ministry of Education should allocate fund for a Guidance and Counselling activities in all basic and second cycle schools. This will enable the guidance coordinators to function effectively at their various levels of work.

Students should be assisted to enable them have a clear cut plan as it will be difficult for them to see things clearly themselves.

Implications of the study

Identifying these factors would give parents, educators, and industry an idea as to where students place most of their trust in the career selection process. Understanding the determinants of career



choice will help Guidance Counsellors and Educators to orientate students on career path planning. In addition, it will help policy-makers to understand students' career decisions. Its very glaring from this study that understanding the factors that contribute to career choice is an issue of recurring interest with impact on the development of a society.

Conclusion

Choosing a future career is the biggest decision facing students and graduates.

The factors considered have great impact on career choice of graduates. Attitude, perception and belief inculcated by graduates have great influence when they are making a career choice. The availability of job also influences career choice.

The most important determinants of the career choice of graduate pursuing business courses are interest in the course, the prestige of the course, prospect of well-paying jobs, bright future prospects, influence of job opportunities and the subjects passed at equivalent level. Personal factors, socio-economic factors and socialisers are important determinants of career choice.



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